

MILDRED BAILEY

GARDEN
V
FOR
ICTORY

THE LEGENDARY

Voice
SESSIONS

THAT "OL'
ROCKIN'
CHAIR"
LADY
SINGS
"SCRAP
YOUR
FAT"

AND OTHER
HITS!

STARRING:

**TEDDY
WILSON**

**RED
NORVO**

**BENNY
GOODMAN**

With **THE DELTA RHYTHM BOYS:**

1. Theme: **ROCKIN' CHAIR** (1:06)
2. **THERE'LL BE SOME CHANGES MADE** (2:05)
3. **IT ALL COMES BACK TO ME NOW** (2:51)
4. **GIVE ME SOME SKIN** (2:43)
5. **GEORGIA ON MY MIND** (3:55)
6. **BUGLE WOOGIE** (2:59)
7. Closing theme and announcement (0:53)

Duets with
TEDDY WILSON:

8. **ROCKIN' CHAIR** (4:37)
9. **SUNDAY, MONDAY OR ALWAYS** (3:53)
10. **SCRAP YOUR FAT** (4:28)

11. MORE THAN YOU KNOW (3:10)

With **RED NORVO'S BAND:**

12. **SOMEDAY SWEETHEART** (3:48)
- DOWNHEARTED BLUES**
13. **Breakdown One** (0:22)
14. **Breakdown Two** (0:13)
15. **Master Take** (5:11)

HOLD ON

16. **Breakdown One** (1:23)
17. **Breakdown Two** (0:49)
18. **Complete Take** (2:54)

With **BENNY GOODMAN'S ALL-STARS:**

19. **THERE'LL BE A JUBILEE** (3:10)

With **PAUL BARON AND HIS ORCHESTRA:**

20. **SUMMERTIME** (2:58)
21. **RIGHT AS THE RAIN** (3:36)

VJC-1006-2



22. **TOGETHER** (2:57)
23. **EVALINA** (2:37)
24. **FROM THE LAND OF SKY BLUE WATER** (2:32)

With **THE ELLIS LARKINS TRIO:**

25. **I'LL CLOSE MY EYES** (3:12)
26. **THAT AIN'T RIGHT** (3:14)

With **CARMEN MASTREN AND HIS ORCHESTRA:**

27. **LOVER, COME BACK TO ME** (2:53)
28. **IT'S SO PEACEFUL IN THE COUNTRY** (2:32)



NOTE FROM THE PRODUCER:

Mildred Bailey was the first of the canaries, but though she perfected the one-chorus vocal refrain, her own career hardly ran the customary bands-then-solo changes. In fact, Bailey's musical existence divides up evenly into three distinct choruses.

First came her tenure in which she put the girl band singer on the map when she sang with Paul Whiteman. Then Bailey became the only major female vocalist to tour as co-leader of her own orchestra (the "Mr. and Mrs. Swing" band, lead in tandem with her third husband, Red Norvo), which broke up by the end of 1938.

This disc samples the third phase of her short career, which included a brief reunion with Benny Goodman, numerous guest shots on the radio with various bands (and shows of her own), and several commercial sessions for different labels—some major, but mostly independents.

But what makes the '40s the high point of the Mildred Bailey Story is the show she did for CBS in 1944 and 1945. More than a simple singer-and-orchestra series, *Mildred Bailey and Company* (later retitled *Music Till Midnight*) was perhaps jazz's finest hour on the radio. In addition to her own sumptuous singing, which was never heard to better advantage, Bailey played hostess to dozens of the greatest names in jazz, all of whom were featured front and center in the solo spotlight with the show's resident great big band (directed by Paul Baron)

and in small group settings.

Thirty-six half-hour shows in all, it is believed that they all exist and, if there's enough demand for it, could conceivably be issued in their entirety on a series of 12 compact discs. With this hope in mind, we've only lightly sampled the '44-'45 Bailey show here, offering a mere handful of the great numbers she performed live on this series, choosing our selections from numbers that were subsequently issued on V-Disc (finding exceptionally clean copies to work from, including a test pressing).

However, for the lion's share of this release we offer instead a fairly complete accounting of Bailey's V-Disc sessions, meaning those recorded expressly for the V-Disc program, and not taken down from her live broadcasts. In addition to having had the opportunity to work from the original 16-inch glass-based acetates, which offer sound far better than the actual discs themselves, we're also very pleased to offer several numbers that up till now have never been issued at all, including one tune completely undocumented.

Please note that we have unearthed several new alternate takes from the other Norvo V-Disc sessions (heard in their entirety on our two *RED NORVO* packages, *VOLUME ONE* [VJC-1005-2], including the instrumental numbers from the 17 May 1944 date, of which Bailey's vocal numbers are included here, and *VOLUME TWO* [VJC-1008-2]) and also one undelisted expletive from the November '43 date. However, absolutely no alternate or breakdown takes have been found of the four classic Mildred Bailey-Teddy Wilson duets, leading us



to believe that Mildred's empathy with her favorite accompanist was so great that they cut these extended masterpieces in a mere one take each! These one-on-one encounters begin with the third reading of her landmark "Rockin' Chair," which is so obviously the definitive reading of this classic (in spite of excellent attempts at it by Roy Eldridge, Louis Armstrong and Jack Teagarden) that we had no qualms about titling this CD after it, even though there have already been more than a few Bailey al-

bums bearing that appellation.

You'll also hear two prime examples of the V-Disc engineers capturing Bailey live on two other radio guest appearances: with an all-star aggregation featuring old buddy Roy Eldridge and led by Benny Goodman on the *For the Record* program and relaxed as can be with the Ellis Larkins trio on the WNEW *Saturday Night Swing Session* series.

Finally, we've framed this whole collection with two extremely rewarding radio sessions completely unrelated to the V-Disc program: Bailey's own show of the early '40s (almost nothing is known about this particular broadcast; one can only speculate whether it is merely one of a series or perhaps an audition disc), and two excellent songs from a Saturday morning series—don't hold the fact that it was hosted by the dreaded Morton Downey, Sr. against it! If this show was from the Spring of 1951, as we believe it to be, then these mark the last known extant performance by the great rockin' chair lady.

As an added attraction to this loose sampling of La Bailey's great years, we've included a profile of her from the actual period itself, which first appeared in the March, 1946 issue of *Band Leader* magazine, and which includes much first-hand data in the lady's own words. Whether this current collection serves as an introduction to the fabulous legacy of Mildred Bailey for you or merely fills in several important gaps in your Bailey collection, we hope we've made it clear that Bailey was a quintessential American artist—whose work is just beginning to be fully appreciated.

Rockin' Chair Lady

by Margaret Winter

Mildred Bailey opened her outsize brown velvet eyes at me in baffled amazement. Then she threw back her head and laughed—and Mildred Bailey's laugh is really generous. It's as ample as her voice—and that's big enough for everybody.

"Happy?" she asked. "Me? Happy to sing? Honey, I like singing just like I like breathing. I can't imagine one without the other." I had asked her if she is happy singing—if the "Rockin' Chair Lady" is as happy as she sounds when she gives out with the tunes.

"Perhaps I can't imagine doing anything else because I never *have* done anything else. I was the first girl vocalist in front of a big name band, you know. I started the style in girl singers. Paul Whiteman heard me in Los Angeles and engaged me for in front of the band. Hoagy Carmichael wrote "Ol' Rockin' Chair's Got Me" for me—and I was set, as the 'Rockin' Chair Lady'.

"Before that—well—I was brought up singing. I lived on a farm near Seattle, Washington, and my mother and my father were both fine musicians.

"I'm a *real* American, you know. Part Indian, the Coeur d'Elene tribe from Canada. When I was four I was singing at farm dances and local affairs. Mother was at the piano, Father played violin, and little Mildred sang. We're all musicians—my brother, Al Rinker, was one of the original Rhythm Boys with

Bing Crosby.

"My first job was in Hal Weeks' music store in Seattle. He wrote 'Hindustan'. Then I worked as a singer in Los Angeles, over KMTR. I remember the first song I sang as a professional singer was "A Good Man Is Hard to Find"—good then as now—true then as now, too. Then I met Paul Whiteman."

Mildred pioneered the trail since followed by ace warblers. She stayed with the band four years and then struck out on her own, where she's been ever since. "I've recorded with all the big bands," she told me. "Tommy Dorsey, Jimmy Dorsey, Joe Venuti, Eddie Lang—all of 'em."

It doesn't matter to Mildred where she sings—she just wants to sing. But if she has to choose, she'll take radio every time.

"I think I can reach more people over radio," she explained. "I love entertaining—but what I really like about it is that it gives me a chance to sing, and that's when I feel really alive. Seems to me I've got the sort of voice that should be listened to more than looked at. Sitting in their homes the people who make up the radio audience have nothing to do but *listen*—and they do."

Miss Bailey's favorite radio programs, of all she's worked on, are, she thinks, the Old Gold program and the *Mildred Bailey and Company* show, both of which went out over CBS wires.

"I think folks like love ballads and spiritu-



Mr. and Mrs. Swing in the late Thirties.

als best," she told me when I asked her what kind of songs were tops with her audiences. "They like love ballads because they hit home. Love's a lovely thing that happens to most everybody once in a lifetime and everybody likes to dream it all over again."

Mildred sat up straight and pointed a finger. "People like spirituals," she stated firmly, "but I think they ought to like them even more.

Spirituals are our real American folk songs."

Aside from singing, Miss Bailey likes to talk about her pets—it's dachshunds for her. She has four: Old Man, (he's thirteen years old!), Linda, Susan and Spot.

Every year, on December 18th, there's a birthday party for the pups at Miss Bailey's house. The appetizer is chopped chicken livers, the entree is fresh chopped meat, and there's

a birthday cake apiece with the owner's name written across the top.

"Believe it or not, Linda tries to sing," Miss Bailey confided to me. "You're always reading about a talking horse or an elephant who can't forget. *I've* got a singing dog!"

The Bailey pets are accustomed to attention and they ask for it. They even line up at the bathtub to have their faces washed.

"That's all right when I'm tubbing," says Mildred, "but guests sometimes are surprised."

The "Rockin' Chair Lady" naturally gets a heap of mail. "When you sing songs that touch the heart," explained Mildred, "people write to tell you that the song means a whole lot — and to say 'thank you'. For years I've carried on a correspondence with a boy in Indiana. He writes, his mother writes, and they send me presents — homey things: fudge, cookies and things like that."

Customers have preferences in songs as well as singers. From Miss Bailey, at theaters, on her numerous radio guest-appearances, and on records, they like to hear "Week-End for a Private Secretary" — "Guess I'll Go Back Home This Summer" — "Hold On" — and "All Too Soon" — in addition to "Ol' Rockin' Chair."

To young singers coming up in the entertainment world, Miss Bailey gives this advice: "Sing it — and mean it. The audience can always tell. Sing from your heart to the hearts of your listeners, and give them a little variety, too. Nobody wants to weep all the time, but nobody wants to laugh always, either.

"An act featuring sincerity and variety can't lose," concluded the very first Lady of Song.

THE MILDRED BAILEY SHOW: Accompanied by rhythm section of unknown (p), (g), (b), (d), and the Delta Rhythm Boys (vocal quartet, possibly including Carl Jones, Lee Gaines, Kelsey Pharr and Traverse Crawford, where indicated). The date has been speculated as 1943, however, the announcer describes *It All Comes Back to Me Now*, published in 1940, as a new tune. Transcribed without a studio audience for broadcast by CBS.

1. **Theme: ROCKIN' CHAIR, and opening announcement** (1:06)
(Hoagy Carmichael)
2. **THERE'LL BE SOME CHANGES MADE** (2:05)
(Billy Higgins & W. Benton Overstreet)
Accompanied by the Delta Rhythm Boys.
3. **IT ALL COMES BACK TO ME NOW** (2:51)
(Hy Zaret, Joan Whitney & Alex Kramer)
4. **GIVE ME SOME SKIN** (2:43)
(Tiny Parham & Gladys Hampton)
Vocal by the Delta Rhythm Boys.
5. **GEORGIA ON MY MIND** (3:55)
(Stuart Gorrell & Hoagy Carmichael)
Accompanied by the Delta Rhythm Boys.
6. **BUGLE WOOGIE** (2:59)
(Livingston Gearhart)
Accompanied by the Delta Rhythm Boys.
7. **Closing theme and announcement** (0:53)

MILDRED BAILEY and TEDDY WILSON, voice and piano duets. Recorded for V-Disc, 4 November, 1943.

8. **ROCKIN' CHAIR** (4:37)
(Hoagy Carmichael)
Spoken Introduction breakdown (the barnyard epithet). Spoken Introduction as issued, directly into Master Take as issued on V-Disc 105-A
9. **SUNDAY, MONDAY OR ALWAYS** (3:53)
(Johnny Burke & James Van Heusen)
Spoken Introduction, directly into Master Take as issued on V-Disc 105-B
10. **SCRAP YOUR FAT** (4:28)
(Burke)
Spoken Introduction, directly into Master Take as issued on V-Disc 135-B
11. **MORE THAN YOU KNOW** (3:10)
(Vincent Youmans-Billy Rose-Edward Eliscu)
Spoken Introduction, directly into Master Take as issued on V-Disc 202-A

RED NORVO QUINTET: Norvo (vib) dir: Aaron Sachs (cl, as [on *Someday Sweetheart*]); Danny Negri (p); Remo Palmieri (g); Clyde Lombardi (b); Eddie Dell (d); Mildred Bailey (v). RCA Victor Studios, New York, 17 May 1944.

12. **SOMEDAY SWEETHEART** (3:48)
(J. & B. Spikes)
Solos: Norvo, Palmieri.
Unissued, but originally scheduled for release on V-Disc 614-A

DOWNHEARTED BLUES

(Alberta Hunter & Lovie Austin)

Solo: Norvo.

13. Breakdown One (0:22)
14. Breakdown Two (0:13)
15. Master Take (5:11)
as issued on V-Disc 524-A

MILDRED BAILEY AND RED NORVO: undocumented V-Disc session, apparently containing most of above quintet *minus* Sachs, probably from 24 May 1944.

HOLD ON

(Johnson)

16. Breakdown One (1:23)
Bailey: "Are we playing 'Holding Hands' or 'Hold On'?"
17. Breakdown Two (0:49)
Bailey: "What Happened?"
18. Complete Take, unissued (2:54)

FOR THE RECORD SHOW: MILDRED BAILEY accompanied by BENNY GOODMAN AND THE ALL-STAR BAND: Goodman (cl) dir: Roy Eldridge, Yank Lawson, Mickey McMickle (t); Vernon Brown, Ward Silloway (tb); Reggie Merrill, Hymie Schertzer (as); Art Rollini, Wolf Tayne (ts); Ernie Cacaes (bars); Teddy Wilson (p); Tommy Kay (g); Gene Traxler (b); Specs Powell (d). NBC Studios, New York, 31 July 1944.

19. **THERE'LL BE A JUBILEE** (3:10)
(Phil Moore)
Test Pressing of V-Disc 494-B



THE MILDRED BAILEY SHOW (aka *MUSIC TILL MIDNIGHT*): Accompanied by Paul Baron and his Orchestra. CBS Playhouse No. 3, New York, 20 October 1944.

20. **SUMMERTIME** (2:58)
(George Gershwin, Ira Gershwin, DuBose Heyward; from the opera *Porgy and Bess*, 1935)
From V-Disc 414-B

3 November 1944

21. **RIGHT AS THE RAIN** (3:36)
(Harold Arlen & E. Y. Harburg; from the show *Bloomer Girl*)
From V-Disc 387-A

10 November 1944

22. **TOGETHER** (2:57)
(Buddy DeSylva, Ray Brown & Lew Henderson, 1928; used in the 1944 film *Since You Went Away*)

23. **EVALINA** (2:37)
(E. Y. Harburg & Harold Arlen; from the show *Bloomer Girl*, 1944)

17 November 1944

24. **FROM THE LAND OF SKY
BLUE WATER** (2:32)
(Nelle Richmond Eberhart, Charles Wakefield Cadman, 1909)
From V-Disc 414-B

WNEW *SATURDAY NIGHT SWING SESSION*: Accompanied by the ELLIS LARKINS TRIO: Larkins (p); Gene Fields (g);

Beverly Peer (b). 1 March 1947, WNEW studios, New York.

25. **I'LL CLOSE MY EYES** (3:12)
(Reid-Kaye)
From V-Disc 772-B

Patter between emcee Bob Bach and Bailey.

26. **THAT AIN'T RIGHT** (3:14)
(Nat King Cole & Irving Mills)
From V-Disc 772-B

THE MORTON DOWNEY SHOW: Accompanied by studio orchestra directed by Carmen Mastren (g). Spring, 1951.

27. **LOVER, COME BACK TO ME**
(2:53)
(Oscar Hammerstein & Sig Romberg, 1928; from the operetta *The New Moon*)

28. **IT'S SO PEACEFUL IN THE
COUNTRY** (2:32)
(Alec Wilder)

TOTAL TIME: 77:25

SETH WINNER: audio restoration
DAVE WEINER: additional material
BILL GOTTLIEB: cover photo
HUGH TURNER: interior photos
COLLIN KELLOGG: design

Other releases in **THE LEGENDARY V-DISC MASTERS** series, taken from the original 16" glass acetates, include *BENNY GOODMAN* (VJC-1001-2) and *RED NORVO* (VJC-1005-2), available from your local compact disc dealer.

1. Theme: ROCKIN' CHAIR 2. THERE'LL BE SOME CHANGES MADE 3. IT ALL COMES BACK TO ME NOW 4. GIVE ME SOME SKIN 5. GEORGIA ON MY MIND 6. BUGLE WOOGIE 7. Closing theme 8. ROCKIN' CHAIR 9. SUNDAY, MONDAY OR ALWAYS 10. SCRAP YOUR FAT 11. MORE THAN YOU KNOW 12. SOMEDAY SWEETHEART 13. DOWNHEARTED BLUES Breakdown One 14. Breakdown Two 15. Master Take HOLD ON 16. Breakdown One 17. Breakdown Two 18. Complete Take 19. THERE'LL BE A JUBILEE 20. SUMMERTIME 21. RIGHT AS THE RAIN 22. TOGETHER 23. EVALINA 24. FROM THE LAND OF SKY BLUE WATER
25. I'LL CLOSE MY EYES
 26. THAT AIN'T RIGHT
 27. LOVER, COME BACK TO ME
 28. IT'S SO PEACEFUL IN THE COUNTRY

THE LEGENDARY
 V-DISC SESSIONS

VJC-1006-2

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MILDRED
 BAILEY

"ROCKIN' CHAIR"

V-Disc

COMPACT
 disc
 DIGITAL AUDIO